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AUTHOR Shafer, Robert E.
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ABSTRACT

To determine teachers' attitudes (and reasons for these attitudes) toward the language of children in their schools, 33 teachers in selected infant and junior schools in England and a similar number in the United States representing a cross-section of schools and geographic areas in the two countries were interviewed. More than 90 percent of the teachers in both countries perceived the language of children from working-class homes in England and lower socioeconomic groups in the United States as being deficient in some way for six main reasons. The attribution of linguistic deprivation to children and the reasons revealed by the teachers to explain such deprivation seem to be of sufficient dimensionality and persistence to constitute consistent stereotypic behavior in evaluating the language of children. Conclusions and recommendations of this study relate to the teaching of language and to the preparation of teachers in relation to the effect teachers' attitudes have on their evaluations of children's learning potentials, their intellectual capacities, and their communicative competence. (Author/JM)

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"A Cross-National Study of Teacher Attitudes Toward Children's Language in England and the United States"

by

Robert E. Shafer
Arizona State University

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ABSTRACT

Robert E. Shafer
Professor of English
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

"A Cross-National Study of Teacher Attitudes Toward Children's Language in England and the United States"

Thirty-three teachers in selected infant and junior schools in England and a similar number in the United States representing a cross-section of schools and geographic areas in the two countries were interviewed to determine their attitudes toward the language of children in their schools and their estimates of the reasons for their attitudes. More than ninety per cent of the teachers interviewed in both countries perceived the language of children coming from working-class homes in England and lower socio-economic groups in the United States as being deficient in some way and also to some extent they applied these evaluations to children from middle-class homes as well.

The teachers explained their attitudes by such reasons as: a. aspects of parental neglect b. socio-economic status of parents c. the language of parents d. the attitudes of parents toward the schools e. the interference of regional dialects f. the interference of social dialects and g. a variety of miscellaneous factors.

An analysis of depth interviews revealed the existence of the socially stratified language attitudes mentioned above among teachers in both countries. These attitudes not only concerned the language of children speaking a particular dialect but also were found to be present in adults speaking that dialect.

The attribution of linguistic deprivation to children and the reasons revealed to explain such deprivation by the teachers in this study in their

evaluation of the language of the children in their schools seem to be of sufficient dimensionality and persistence to constitute consistent stereotypic behavior in evaluating the language of children from certain speech communities used in this study. The conclusions and recommendations of this study relate to the teaching of language and to the preparation of teachers insofar as their attitudes affect teacher's evaluations of children's learning potentials, their intellectual capacities and their communicative competence.

"A Cross-National Study of Teacher Attitudes Toward Children's Language in England and the United States"

Robert E. Shafer
*Arizona State University

In his recent book, Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach, Dell Hymes notes the need to look broadly at present practice in sociolinguistic research which "presupposes a science of mankind among whose human life departments has been accurately and completely apportioned." Such practice represents and "perpetuates a fragmented incomplete understanding of humanity..." Hymes proposes three themes...fundamental to sociolinguistics:

> ...first, that there is a mode of organization of language that is a part of the organization of communicative conduct in a community, whose understanding requires a corresponding, new mode of description of language; second, that recognition of this mode of organization leads one to recognize that the study of language is a multidisciplinary field, a field to which ordinary linguistics is indispensable, but to which other disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology, education, folklore and poetics are indispensable as well; third, that study of this mode of organization leads one to reconsider the bases of linguistics itself...[1]

[1] Hymes, Dell, Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 7-8.

In a subsequent chapter, "Toward Ethnographies of Communication," Hymes calls for a new broader approach describing and characterizing the various components and relations among th components in communicative events. For ethnographic purposes, varieties of insights into various "codes" in use in a society are possible, such as literary, philosophical and:

> ...other schemes of functions, and of functional types of messages, are also useful as sources of insight and details. (It may prove desirable to undertake a comparative and historical analysis of such schemes, as 'homemade models' from our own culture.[2]

[2] Ibid., p. 22.

*The researcher wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the many teachers who cooperated in the study in both countries and the support of the Department of Education Studies, Oxford University, and the Department of English, Arizona State University.

Hymes further notes that "focus on the addressor or sender in relation to other components entails such types of functions as identification of the source, expression of attitude toward one or another component or toward the event as a whole..."[3]

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[3] Ibid.

Current studies of language attitudes such as those noted in the publication, Language Attitudes: Current Trends and Prospects, edited by Roger W. Shuy and Ralph W. Fasold (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1973) placed the study of language attitudes in the context of Hymes' broadened view of developing ethnographies of communication within sociolinguistic research. Williams has demonstrated a variety of research techniques appropriate to the study of language attitudes combining strategies from social dialect study and socio-psychological strategies for attitude research.[4]

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[4] Williams, Frederick, "Some Recent Studies of Language Attitudes" in Some New Directions in Linguistics, Roger W. Shuy, editor, Georgetown University School of Languages and Linguistics, 1973, pp. 121-149.

Williams notes that:

> ...in working with groups mainly representing teachers or teacher candidates as raters, and with children as speakers, a two-factor evaluation model of 'confidence-eagerness' and 'ethnicity-nonstandardness' seems to emerge across a great variety of studies... In retrospect, there does seem to be some type of 'fit' between the two judgmental dimensions and some of the performance dimensions discussed in social dialect studies. Thus, for example, one might generalize that contrasts among speakers, or speakers in different situations, are marked in the main by differences in the grammatical system being brought to bear and the fluency with which it is used. Relative to the present attitudinal response model, the grammatical system being used manifests itself in dialect characteristics; and this in turn seems to provide cues for ratings of 'ethnicity-nonstandardness'. Fluency with which language is used in the situation, or at least the lack of hesitation in speech, seemed related to the attitudinal dimension of 'confidence-eagerness'. In most cases, assumptions about attitudes associated with social dialect differences have been borne out in the research.

> Thus, for example, in the selection of children from low- and middle-status groups it was assumed in the first place that the speech samples would be differentiated in terms of attitudinal ratings. Similarly, attitudinal differences were expected relative to the ethnicity of the speaker. It was anticipated, of course, that these assumptions would be borne out in the studies, so that further questions could be explored.[5]

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[5] Ibid., pp. 145-147.

Williams proposes further that some preliminary evidence has been gathered as to the relationship of types of linguistic attitudes and stereotyping on the part of the rater.[6]

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[6] Ibid., p. 147.

In general, studies of language attitudes have to do with persuading listeners to classify productions of speakers in terms of social stratification factors such as social dialect and further to discover what cues operate in a listener's estimate of the speaker's social status. The general thesis has emerged that most persons have stereotypic sets of attitudes about the social dialects of their speakers and that these attitudes play a role in how a person perceives these cues in another person's speech. Descriptions of such social dialect stereotypes obviously lie within any developing ethnography of communication and may also be of great practical value in training teachers to make practical judgments about the competencies and backgrounds of speakers.

The assumptions of the current study are that stereotypic language attitudes exist within the language attitudes of most teachers as they exist within most adults. As Hymes notes above, cross-cultural studies of language attitudes can be fruitful in revealing the extent to which such attitudes exist in various cultures and speech communities.

Labov's well-known study of The Social Stratification of English in New York City provided an initial basis for many studies in sociolinguistics which were to come after including studies of language attitudes. Labov reasoned that certain phonological variables should be cues to a person's social status, that is, when one hears these cues attitudes emerge in the listener concerning the type of person who is speaking. Labov found that the judgments made by the listeners were good predicters of the speaker's social class.[7]

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[7]Labov, William, The Social Stratification of English in New York City, Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966, pp. 482-503.

If language attitudes can be detected within speech communities and if they are of sufficient dimensionality and persistence that they constitute stereotypic behavior, the significance for education is obvious. With regard to the teaching of language, one of the most significant questions would seem to be: To what extent does the presence of persistent stereotypic attitudes affect the judgment of teachers concerning the language of the children they teach and potentialities of these children for language learning? Another important question is: What causes such attitudes to exist and what can be done about them? The present study attempts to delineate language attitudes of teachers in selected schools in England and the United States as they were expressed freely in interview situations and in other conversations describing the language of the children in their schools.

The Schools and the Teachers

Thirty-three teachers in twenty-one selected infant and junior schools in England and twenty-three teachers in fifteen schools in the United States were interviewed to determine their attitudes toward the language of the children in their schools and to give their estimates of the reasons for their attitudes.

The context for the interviews also usually included a visit to the teacher's school and further conversations with the teacher about the specific techniques and methods used to develop language learning. In the case of the primary schools in England, the schools were chosen on the recommendation of advisers from local school authorities, H.M.I.'s or university personnel in teacher education programs who were familiar with the schools and were serving as consultants for the study. In England, recommended schools ranged throughout the greater London area, the Midlands, East Anglia, Devon, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire. In the United States, most of the teachers had been students in the researcher's graduate Seminar in Language Acquisition and Reading over a period of the past two years at Arizona State University and, therefore, represent a cross-section of schools throughout the greater Phoenix area. Approximately one-third were teachers from the greater Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. Throughout both countries the teachers represented a variety of ages, of geographical and social origins, and of length of service in the profession. In some cases in England, headmasters and headmistresses were included in the sample.

Procedures

In each case in England, the school was visited for a period of at least one day by the researcher. In both England and the United States, teachers saw the interview schedule which had been developed and field-tested before the interview. All participation was voluntary. In some cases the responses were taped and in other cases a shorthand transcript was made. An analysis of the data revealed that teachers tended to reveal their language attitudes through their descriptions of children's language.

What Teachers Say About Children's Language: England and the United States

As in studies by Labov, Shuy, Fasold, and Williams mentioned above, an attempt was made to determine the language attitudes of teachers in selected schools in England and the United States. As in these previous investigations, a goal was to ascertain whether or not the informant approves or disapproves of the speech used by the speaker, how he or she compares it with other social and/or regional dialects, and how he or she feels about the need to change the language of the speaker. Since many of the teachers commented on the state of their pupil's writing, reading, and listening as well as speaking, they also made general comments as to ways in which they have proceeded or might proceed to intervene in the development of children's language abilities. Also, as in the case of Labov's informants, an attempt was made to assess emotional attitudes as well as cognitive statements.

Because of the extensive amount of data collected in this study, which is a part of a larger study of the teaching of the mother tongue, an analysis to determine such factors as "confidence-eagerness" and "ethnicity-nonstandardness" will not be attempted here. Rather, some of the teacher's statements will be presented which fall under certain rubrics which emerged in analyzing the data for the purposes of general comparison. The data will generally be reported as: a. ways in which the teachers actually described children's language behavior; and b. statements teachers made in an attempt to interpret the reasons for the observations they had made about children's language.

Analysis of the Data

More than ninety percent of the English teachers in the study described the language of the children coming into the primary school and in the primary school as being deficient in some way, while fewer than fifty percent of the American teachers interviewed described the language of the children in their

primary schools as being deficient. In both countries many comments were made about regional and social dialects, about the interference of second language and second dialect in learning English, about paralinguistic behavior and about the complexities of language specifically concerned with the language skills which the children did or did not possess when they first entered school or as they progressed through school. As to the reasons for the causes of the language behavior they described, teachers in both countries mentioned such elements as lack of communication with parents, the education of parents, the language of parents, the social class of parents, the interference of second dialects and second languages, the general neglect of children, and the physical and emotional deprivation of children within the cycle of poverty. Many also mentioned fear that children have of being corrected because they speak a second language or a second dialect, the general impotency of the school with respect to the ability to develop the communicative abilities of many children, the influence of parents and of peer groups and of general intelligence factors. Such comments as follow are representative of those made by teachers in both countries in these areas:

Descriptions of Language Behavior

1.1 Vocabulary

English teacher 1: "One of the things that I notice about the children when they first come to school is how little they understand of what I am saying to them."

English teacher 5: "A few of the children are very fluent when they come to school; others come to school speaking only syllables..."

English teacher 6: "There is a wide divergence between literate children and those who are word bound, e.g., bound to single-word responses. These children reveal themselves immediately as soon as they come to school."

English teacher 8: "Many of the children who come in are practically inarticulate and literally cannot express themselves in words at all. They have a rather tense absorption with movement that many children

feel when they want to communicate their feelings and they will use gestures and facial expressions which undoubtedly are a part of their repertoire of language before they ever learn to speak. They translate their feelings into some sorts of sounds which later become words."

American teacher 1: "I work in a school which has a ninety-nine percent black population. I find that the children are very verbal, very few are hostile to me, and they express themselves freely, but one-third of the children in the school have reading difficulties."

American teacher 2: "I work in a school which has about ninety-five percent black children. The children are fluent speakers and most of them are fluent readers as well. The children pick up language very readily. They ask questions like: Will it be a shortened day or minimum day today? (referring to the school schedule)."

American teacher 3: "More than half of the children in my school come from a Spanish-language background. They speak Spanish together both outside the school and inside the school. They are reluctant to speak English and have no need to do so, unless they are thrown into an English peer group situation...For example, I had two fourth graders who were accidentally moved into an all English class and now that they are in sixth grade are quite fluent in English."

1.2 Language Structure

English teacher 5: "A few of the children are very fluent when they come to school; others come to school speaking only syllables..." "Many of the middle class children bring the school language with them to school and many who don't have it when they come have to develop it."

English teacher 6: "The children come to school speaking sentences without using adverbs or adjectives..."

English teacher 7: "One of the ways I can definitely tell the differences in middle-class or working-class children is that the working-class children will drop their h's."

American teacher 1: "About seventy-five percent of the students in my school can switch back and forth from black dialect to standard English at will. Another twenty-five percent use only black dialect. For example, they use the be's system and they use dem's and dat's (sic)." (Be's system here refers undoubtedly to the rule system described by Labov for the copula.)

American teacher 2: "Students are highly verbal and mostly speak standard English and not black dialect. Some children who come from one-parent homes or are suffering some forms of neglect can't express themselves very well verbally. For example, one six year old child can't make sentences and speaks mostly in isolated words and gestures."

American teacher 3: "Many of the Spanish-speaking children are completely fluent in Spanish, but they have difficulty making English sentences."

American teacher 7: "Although most of the children from my school are native speakers of English, they all need practice in expanding their sentences and using adjectives and adverbs."

American teacher 11: "Most of the children in my school speak very well, but many of them have reading problems."

1.3 Paralinguistic Behavior

Since teachers deal with many children, and deal with them in a variety of contexts in school, many of the actual observations extended not only to speech but to speech produced in a particular context or communication situation where certain kinds of paralinguistic behavior were exhibited. With respect to paralinguistic behavior, teachers in both countries seemed to associate it with either language deficiency or with emotional instability.

English teacher 1: "Middle class children are sometimes much more aggressive in school at first..."

English teacher 2: "You can identify working class children by the fact that they will look the other way when you speak to them. They will not answer. They will simply nod instead of using words...When the parents come in for the initial interview they will look at the parents when I speak to them and then the parent will answer for the child. This is a very common pattern and happens over and over again in this school but always with working class children and parents."

English teacher 3: "Many of the children who come to this school are almost non-verbal."

English teacher 6: "I can tell as soon as I interview a mother and entering 5 year old child that in many cases the child is very sensitive to speaking in front of other people. In many cases the parent is aggressive and will attempt to answer for the child or the child will simply look away and be silent...These facts are directly related to the social structure of our community..."

American teacher 1: "The children especially like role playing, drama, and movement activities."

American teacher 3: "The Spanish-speaking children group themselves on the yard into Cuban speakers, Puerto-Rican speakers, and Chicanos. All the children like to go on field trips."

American teacher 10: "The children who have difficulty using language will point or nod or do other non-verbal things to achieve communication."

Why Teachers Think Children Speak as They Do

Most of the teachers from both countries not only described children's language in the ways noted above, they also offered explanations as to why they felt that their children were deficient, while the American teachers explained both reasons for deficiencies and the reasons for language fluency. In general, American teachers went much more deeply into the sociology of their school and community voluntarily than did English teachers. In both countries the attitudes expressed concerned the influences of home, family, and as has already been noted dealt with both social and regional dialects of the larger speech community. Generally, English teachers were more prone to express dialect as a cause of linguistic deficiency and American teachers were more prone to describe it simply as a fact but to indicate that students who spoke a dialect definitely did not speak standard English. In other statements, generally not dealt with in this paper, they described in detail what measures they themselves feel are necessary in order to compensate for what they perceive to be deficiencies in language and reading. Many also note their lack of knowledge of what measures they might take in order to provide for these deficiencies.

2.1 Family Influences

Most of the teachers from both countries noted home and family influences as being extremely significant in developing the kinds of language which children bring to school. In many cases, they coupled their descriptions of family with a description of the family's place in the social structure. In the case of the English teachers, the discussion of the family almost always took place in terms of relating the family's position as being either in the

working class or the middle class. In the case of American teachers, the place of the family in the social class structure was much less commonly referred to initially, but could be elicited by the interviewer with sufficient probing. With respect to the English teacher, the influence of the family was generally considered to be negative with respect to working-class parents and positive with respect to middle- or upper-class families with respect to language development. Only about forty percent of the sample of American teachers made a direct connection between social class and language deficiency.

> English teacher 1: "It seems to me that Bernstein's explanation of the role of the mother and the family is very valid. In this school, for example, we have about 60% children from the working class and about 40% children from the middle class and it is clear that the middle class children have come to school with a love of books, that they have already talked a lot about books at home and that their mothers have explained things to them and they have been involved in conversations with their mothers in particular...I think that the ones who come to school with a restricted code have more trouble with reading initially than those who do not."

> American teacher 1: "The parents don't come to school with the children. All the parents work and many have had negative experiences with school."

> American teacher 2: "The parents place considerable pressure on the children to achieve and they also place considerable pressure on the teachers and administrators in the school. In many homes, both parents work and the children are left with babysitters or at day care centers. This seems to have a negative effect on their language. Since most of the parents come from professional homes, many of the children simply don't know their parents. Many of the children who come from one parent homes have emotional problems. Especially when the mother is out of the home a considerable part of the time, the child has emotional problems. I would estimate that of the thirty-three children I work with, about one-third have emotional difficulties which present them with general learning problems which show up in both their language and reading. In general the children's language ability is not up to what the parents think it should be."

> American teacher 3: "Many of the children live in two-bedroom apartments where there are ten people living in the same apartment. In many of the homes, there is no father present. The children are on food stamps and welfare and can generally be considered culturally deprived. The parents are generally afraid of the school and do not come to the school. In many cases, the parents do not feel that they speak English very well and it is clear that Spanish is the

language of the home. The parents don't come to school unless they come for parent-teacher conferences. We do have some teacher aides who speak Spanish and who are parents who make a good contribution to our language program."

2.2 Social and Regional Dialects

As can be seen from the comments above relating to family and community influences, it is practically impossible, and would undoubtedly serve no useful purpose to attempt to separate teachers' comments concerning the interrelation ships of family, community, and social structure. Teachers in both England and the United States interpreted children's language as representative of larger units of the social structure in their respective countries. In England they consistently commented on the differences in language between working-class children and middle-class children. In the United States many of the comments made concerning regional and social dialects must be interpreted within the framework of the social structure of the particular speech community. In England regional dialects are generally detectable and operate in some instances as social dialects. In the United States regional dialects seem to be less a factor in and of themselves; rather they operate as markers of membership within particular speech communities, e.g., a particular black dialect community or a particular Spanish language community.

The following comments of teachers are representative:

English teacher 1: "There is currently a difference of accent between the working-class children and the middle-class children. (The teacher drew two circle which intersected and overlapped.) The overlapping part of each of these circles would be the part where a group of working class who are almost in the middle class can communicate about on the level with middle-class children when they come into school, otherwise if they are in this other part of the working-class circle they have considerable difficulty in understanding middle-class children and in particular understanding the teacher."

English teacher 5: "Their language will always give them away insofar as class is concerned. For example, a middle-class child will say, 'After school I went to the shop,' and a working-class

child will say, 'After school I went up to the shop.' Also the children who live on the council estates have a definite common language which is immediately evident when they come to school. For example, they all have the same synonym for lavatory. This will not be the case with the children who are not from the council estates."

American teacher 1: "Most of the children speak black dialect in this school but many come close to standard English." (Note that this teacher also commented earlier that seventy-five percent of the students could switch from black dialect to standard English readily, while twenty-five percent tended to use only black dialect system.)

American teacher 2: "We receive considerable pressure from the community to work on standardizing the child's English usage. "

American teacher 3: "Since fifty-five percent of the students are Spanish-speaking in this school, there is a range among them between those who speak only Spanish and those who speak English quite well but who have a Spanish accent. One of the problems of improving the English of the Spanish-speaking children...is the fact that they are socially isolated within the community and in many cases within the school as well. Our ESL teachers do not have the training to provide the kind of multi-lingual instruction that their children need. There is in fact a practice of taking ESL teachers from the ranks of reading specialists and regular teachers and not giving them the kind of training they need to work with problems of this sort."

American teacher 10: "Our children come to school speaking a black dialect. It is expected that they will learn to speak standard English. As teachers we are expected to know how to prevent them from using their dialect and actually teach them standard English. One of the problems is that we are prevented from working directly on this problem because of the fact that our school has adopted a particular set of reading textbooks and a set of language textbooks which have little or no relationship to the problems of black dialect speakers learning standard English. We are in many cases forced to use these textbooks and the children are tested on the progress they have made in reading and in language arts in these particular textbooks. Since the material in the textbooks has very little to do with learning standard English, it is difficult for us to develop any effective program for them at all.

Conclusions

The Bernstein "Syndrome" and Teacher Language Attitudes

Many of the teachers in England refer to the influence that the work of Basil Bernstein has had on their thinking. Time and time again in the course

of the study, teachers in England would support their descriptions of the language of children by saying, "As Bernstein has pointed out, these children use a 'restricted code'." Bernstein first used the term "restricted code" in his essay, "Linguistic Codes, Hesitation Phenomena and Intelligence."[8]

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[8] Bernstein, Basil, Language and Speech, No. 5, 1962, pp. 31-46.

He had earlier characterized the "restricted code" as "public language" and had referred to it as having "...short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences, a poor syntactical construction with the verbal forms stressing the active mood...and repetitive use of conjunctions."[9]

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[9] Bernstein, Basil, "A Public Language: Some Sociological Implications of a Linguistic Form," British Journal of Sociology, No. 10, 1959, pp. 311-326.

"Public language," in part described above, was supposedly used by the "unskilled and semi-skilled strata," but approximations to a public language may well be spoken "...in such widely separated groups as criminal sub-cultures, rural groups, armed forces and adolescent groups in particular situations."[10]

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[10] Ibid.

The tragedy of these descriptions of so-called restricted codes and elaborated codes with their carefully worked out connections to the English social structure seems to be in the effects that the descriptions have had on the language attitudes of many teachers in England and apparently to at least some extent in the United States. Most of the teachers in the English sample were familiar with the terms "restricted code" and "elaborated code" and many were familiar with Bernstein's characterizations of these codes. It was a rare instance where an American teacher referred to a restricted code or an elaborated code at all in any of the interviews. Nevertheless, the use of

nonstandard English as in the case of social dialect speakers seems to be clearly tied in minds of many American teachers with the term, "cultural deprivation." Many seemed to feel that if the child who does not speak standard English does not learn to speak it in the school situation, he remains culturally deprived regardless of his control over another language or dialect of English. In his analysis of the origins of this so-called "deficit theory" which appeared in the language attitudes of many of the American teachers in this sample, Labov traces the origins of this directly to Bernstein:

> The most extreme view which proceeds from this orientation -- and one that is now being widely accepted -- is that lower-class Negro children have no language at all. The notion is first drawn from Basil Bernstein's writings that 'much of lower-class language consists of a kind of incidental "emotional" accompaniment to action here and now'. (Jensen 1968:118). Bernstein's views are filtered through a strong bias against all forms of working-class behavior, so that middle-class language is seen as superior in every respect--as 'more abstract, and necessarily somewhat more flexible, detailed and subtle'. One can proceed through a range of such views until one comes to the practical program of Carl Bereiter, Siegfried Engelmann and their associates. (Bereiter et al 1966; Bereiter and Engelmann 1966). Bereiter's program for an academically oriented preschool is based upon their premise that Negro children must have a language with which they can learn, and their empirical finding that these children come to school without such a language. [11]

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[11] Labov, William, "The Logic of Nonstandard English," Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, James E. Alatis, editor, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., 1970, p. 4.

Bernstein has denied that it was his intention to create language attitudes in the minds of teachers which tended to reinforce the idea that children who come from working-class families speak a restricted code and are, therefore, linguistically deficient. Responding to the specific criticism of Labov on this point he notes:

> "It is a travesty to relate the concepts of elaborated or restricted codes to superficial stylistics of middle class and working class forms of conversational behavior, as implied by Labov (1970)." [12]

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[12]Bernstein, Basil, "A Brief Account of the Theory of Codes," unpublished manuscript, University of London Institute of Education, August, 1972.

Bernstein has pointed that his research took a different trend between 1961 and 1966 and that his general concern has been with a definition of codes in the social structure and their roles as communicators of behavior in the social structure -- including language behavior as an important aspect of code.[13]

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[13]Interview with Basil Bernstein, University of London, July, 1974.

It is undoubtedly time for a reevaluation or as Bernstein himself characterizes it, a "recontextualization" of Bernstein's work so that its overall effects can be placed in proper perspective. Such a recontextualization is already beginning to appear:

> The role of language in the educational process is a special aspect of the relation between language and social structure. Bernstein's theories concerning the linguistic basis of educational failure are part of a wider theory of language and society, which encompasses much more than the explanation of the linguistic problems imposed by the educational system on the child whose socialization has taken certain forms. Bernstein's concern is with the fundamental problem of persistence and change in the social structure. Language is the principal means of cultural transmission; but if we seek to understand how it functions in this role, it is not enough just to point up odd instances of the reflection of general sociological categories in this or that invented or recorded utterance. An approach to this question presupposes not only a theory of social structure but also a theory of linguistic structure-- and hence may lead to further insights into the nature of language, by virtue of the perspective which it imposes. The perspective is a 'socio-semantic' one, where the emphasis is on function rather than on structure; where no distinction is made between language and language behaviour; and where the central notion is something like that of 'meaning potential' -- what the speaker 'can mean', with what he 'can say' seen as a realization of it...Preoccupations of a sociological kind, which as was pointed out at the beginning have for a long time held a place in linguistic studies, assume a greater significance in the light of work such as Bernstein's: not only because Bernstein's social theory is based on a concern with language as the essential factor in cultural transmission, but also because it has far-reaching implications for the nature of language itself. And these, in turn, are very relevant to the educational problems from which Bernstein started. Bernstein has shown the structural relationship between language, the socialization process

and education; it is to be expected, therefore, that there will be consequences, for a educational theory and practice, deriving from the perspective on language that his work provides. Some concept of the social functioning of language must in any case always underlie the approach of the school towards its responsibility for the pupil's success in his mother tongue.[14]

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[14]Halliday, M.A.K., Exploration in the Functions of Language, Edward Arnold Publishers, 1973, pp. 69-70.

Dell Hymes has commented similarly:

> Bernstein's work has a significance apart from how one assesses his particular studies, which have been considerably shaped by the exigencies of support for practical concerns. His theoretical views, which precede these studies, are rooted in a belief that the role of language in constituting social reality is crucial to any general sociological theory, and that that role has not yet been understood because it has been approached in terms of an unexamined concept of language. For Bernstein, linguistic features affect the transmission and transformation of social realities through their organization into what he calls 'codes'; that is, through selective organization of linguistic features into styles of speech, not through the agency of a "language" (e.g., "English") as such. He is noted for his twin notions of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes, and this dichotomy has not always done the texture of his thought good service, for the two notions have had to subsume a series of dimensions that ought analytically to be separated, since they cut across speech communities in different ways. Nevertheless, one dimension essential to his views is particularly essential to understanding language as a human problem in the contemporary world. It is the dimension of contrast between restricted speech styles that are predominantly particularistic or context-specific, and elaborated speech styles that are predominantly universalistic or context-free...The point is not that some groups have only one of these styles, and other groups only the other. The potentialities of both are universally present and to some extent employed. Bernstein's point is rather that certain types of communication and social control, especially in families, may lead to the predominant use of one style or the other. Nor is the point that one of these styles is "good," the other "bad." Each has its necessary place. The restricted style, in which understanding can be taken for granted, is essential to efficient communication in some circumstances, and to meaningful personal life in others. A life in which all meanings had to be made explicit, in which there was never anyone to whom one could say, "you know what I mean," with assurance, would be intolerable. Many life choices, not least among academics, are made for the sake or lack of "someone to talk to" in this sense. The elaborated style can be quite out of place, and even destructive, in many circumstances. But, and this is an element of Bernstein's views that has been largely overlooked, the universalistic meanings of the elaborated style are essential if one is to be able to talk about means of communication

themselves, the ways in which meanings come organized in a community in the service of particular interests and cultural hegemony, and so to gain the objective knowledge necessary for the transformation of social relationships.[15]

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[15]Hymes, Dell, "Speech and Language: On the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Speakers" in Language as a Human Problem, edited by Einar Haugen and Morton Bloomfield, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1974, pp. 61-62.

It is nevertheless clear from the data in this study that the misinterpretations of Bernstein's early work described above have apparently become part of the language attitudes of teachers in both England and the United States. Many teachers feel that linguistic deficiencies do exist as a result of one's place in the social class structure. Apparently, for some teachers this attitude represents more or less of a self-fulfilling prophecy, e.g., a child who comes to school from a working-class family in England or from an ethnic minority group in the United States carries with him a "restricted code" of some sort which means that he is linguistically deficient and his chances for success in school and therfore later in life are extremely limited. Further exploration of the effects of such attitudes and their implications for in-service training and school practice are undoubtedly necessary. That such language attitudes exist in the United States and have resulted in the stereotyping of the speech of various ethnic minorities has been clearly demonstrated by the work of Williams.[16]

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[16]Williams, Frederick, "Some Research Notes on Dialect Attitudes and Stereotypes," in Language Attitudes: Current Trends and Prospects, Shuy, Roger and Fasold, Ralph, editors, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1973, pp. 113-127.

Other Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

A major limitation of this study is the fact that it was limited to the relatively small groups of teachers. Certainly other studies should be carried out on larger groups of teachers and other adults to determine the specific

cues which trigger stereotypic language attitudes in certain communication situations. Another conclusion is that further attempts to combine the methods of sociolinguistic research with those of comparative education in developing ethnographies of communication may well be needed. A further conclusion is in the implicit contrast between the views of American teachers and English teachers toward the school and the nature of schooling in the mother tongue in their respective countries. Although all of the teachers in both countries recognized the necessity and importance of developing children's language abilities, they evaluated the effects of the schooling in their respective countries differently as to its effectiveness. Most of the English teachers were generally committed to what would be called a language experience approach to teaching reading and developing language. They seemed satisfied that their own observations in the somewhat smaller primary schools of England would suffice as measures of language development. American teachers seemed much more frustrated by the imposition of parental pressures, state-adopted textbook series, statewide reading tests, and the lack of connection between language development and reading. Many American teachers in the sample said they would use language experience approaches if they received encouragement and sanction from school administrators. Many seemed to feel that the emphasis on programmed materials, basal readers, and other materials imposed on the child from outside interfered with his basic language development. They expressed a hope for smaller schools, smaller classes, and more individualization of language development programs.

Teachers in both countries had considerable confidence in their abilities to work with children to improve their language and reading if given the time, help, and resources to do so. Almost all the teachers expresses needs for further in-service training particularly in this area and stressed that they